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(W. L. M. King)

CANADA AND THE WAR

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MANPOWER AND A TOTAL  
WAR EFFORT

*National Selective Service*

BROADCAST BY

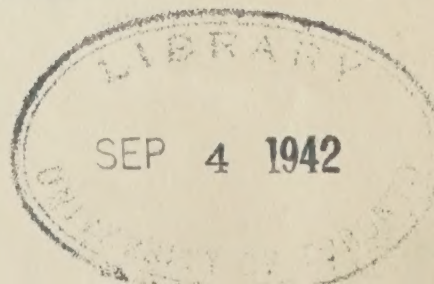
Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING, M.P.  
*Prime Minister of Canada*

AUGUST 19, 1942


*Issued by the Director of Public Information, Ottawa, under the authority of  
Hon. J. T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services*



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# CANADA AND THE WAR

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## MANPOWER AND A TOTAL WAR EFFORT

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### *National Selective Service*

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BROADCAST BY

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING, M.P.  
*Prime Minister of Canada*

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AUGUST 19, 1942

I am speaking to you on a memorable day. You have learned that, after long months of training, Canadian soldiers from Britain have been in action against the enemy. We know how eager the army overseas has been to share the actual combat with their comrades in the navy and the air force. We were proud to hear that our troops had a foremost place in the raid on Dieppe.

The news of any action should not be allowed to destroy our sense of perspective of this world-wide conflict. We have reached one of the gravest hours in history. This is true whatever appearances there may be to the contrary at any given moment.

The Germans are still advancing into the richest areas of southern Russia. Their advance threatens to cut Soviet communications with the forces of the United Nations in Persia, or Iran as it has come to be known, and with their forces in the Middle East. The Nazi advance threatens Persia, and beyond Persia, India.



From the Far East, the Japanese advance westward has reached the frontiers of India. The Japanese forces in Burma are being strengthened for a drive into India itself.

### *The Magnitude of the Danger*

It is plainer than ever that Germany and Japan are engaged in the greatest pincer movement in the whole history of warfare. Their design is to envelop the vast land mass of Russia and China by joining forces in India.

India itself is divided and threatened with disorder. All free peoples sympathize with Indian aspirations for self-government. But deeply as we may regret lost opportunities, we cannot have any sympathy with a course of conduct which places in danger the freedom of mankind. The weakening of Indian powers of resistance can only help the Axis; it cannot help India.

It is not only on land that the outlook is dark. On all the seven seas, the naval supremacy of the United Nations is gravely threatened. The Axis powers are making a stupendous effort to cut off vital supplies at the source, and to isolate North America from the Old World. Japanese landings in Alaska, and attacks already made on both coasts of our own country have brought the danger to our very doors.

### *Need for the Utmost Exertions*

The United Nations have not yet begun to win this war. The danger is not only plainer than ever, it is greater than ever. We shall gain nothing by refusing to face the gravity of the situation. It should not be the occasion for despair, but rather for grim determination. It is clearer than ever that the freedom of the world, and with it the freedom of our own continent and our own country, can only be saved by the utmost exertions of all the United Nations.

The picture fortunately is not wholly dark. Russia and China have been gravely weakened, but their peoples fight on with unparalleled heroism. Despite her losses, Russia has immense resources of manpower and materials and a huge territory untouched by the enemy. In Egypt the enemy has been halted, and held at the very moment when all there seemed to be lost. The Mediterranean has not been closed. Britain remains a fortress of world freedom. From the British base, offensive action has steadily increased. The nations of the British Commonwealth continue to combine their forces and to fight as one. With every week that passes, Canadian and American forces at sea, on land and in the air, are adding to the strength of the United Nations in all the theatres of war. In the Pacific severe blows have been dealt to Japanese power. The immense strength of the United States is making itself felt on all the continents in the world. Complete agreement exists among the Allied powers on the present and future plans of campaign.



The great strength of the United Nations affords us the needed courage to turn our hopes into the reality of successful action. The magnitude of the danger must increase our determination. More essential than ever to the winning of the war is the need of the most complete organization of all efforts. To this one end, Canada's contribution must be made just as comprehensive and effective as it can possibly be made. Every citizen must make his most useful individual contribution.

### *The Aim of Manpower Policy*

The aim and the means employed by the government to direct the services of all men and women into the most needed channels are described as its manpower policy. The government's manpower policy has already touched the lives of millions of Canadians, but there still remain considerable numbers who are capable of rendering much greater service than any they have thus far performed.

The government's policy is that every man and woman capable of performing some form of war service should undertake the service for which he or she may be best qualified and which the demands of war require. This policy will necessarily immediately affect all but the very old, the very young and the disabled among us. A total effort for total war has been the goal towards which the government has been steadily striving. While much has been achieved, we have now come to the time when, on all sides, any and every means necessary to the accomplishment of our aim must be employed. The government's policy is a positive, not a negative policy. It will be administered without fear or favour and without regard for race, or creed, or class. It must be recognized that the security of each individual is bound up in the security of the nation as a whole. Every person must regard his services as essential to the combined effort. Moreover all should realize that the lives of our fighting men at sea, on land and in the air depend on men for the reinforcement of their ranks and on unremitting toil on the farm, in the mine, in the forest, in the mill and the factory, and on the merchant ships. Our growing consciousness of the danger will, I believe, increase the readiness of all to accept the added direction of their efforts.

### *The Need for the Services of All*

I have told you that the services of all are required. This includes the services of women as well as of men; the services alike of young and old; the services, as I have said, of all except the very young, the very old and the disabled. The power represented by these combined services, we speak of as "total manpower". As you see, it includes, as well "womanpower" and the power of youth.

The government is determined, as far as it is humanly possible, to make sure that the best use is made of the services of all men



and women, and that every able-bodied man undertakes some form of essential service, in the armed forces, in war production or in a vital civilian activity. Selection enforced where need be by positive action on the part of the State is the method employed to ensure this end. The phrase used to describe this process is "national selective service".

I do not need to tell you that, to the total war effort which is our goal, it is not only the services of all that are essential, but what is of equal if not of greater importance, the efficient use of those services.

The efficient use of services of men and women for war purposes demands two things. It demands first that the services of all persons not needed to maintain the health and efficiency of the people should be employed directly for war purposes. This, in military language, is spoken of as "mobilizing" manpower. Secondly, it demands that the services of the persons who are thus "mobilized" shall be employed in the most useful manner.

The services of men and women are imperatively needed for the armed forces. All, however, cannot be employed in the armed forces. For example, it would not be possible to have a total effort if so many men were training for the navy that none were left to build ships. We could not have a total effort if so many men were taken into the army that enough were not left to make tanks and guns and shells. One could go on and give hundreds of similar examples, but others will suggest themselves to your own minds. Those whose services are needed to maintain the health and efficiency of the people, if they are doing all they can in their respective occupations, should not feel that they have no place in the war effort.

### *. A Balanced Programme*

Parliament, as you are aware, has given the government immense powers to control and direct the total services of men and women to meet the needs of war. I propose to tell you how some of these powers have been used. I wish also to speak of a number of new measures it is intended to employ.

I think the manpower policy might be clearer to you were I to answer a number of questions which many of you have already been asking.

The first question I shall answer is: What tasks are men and women needed for in wartime? Men—and women, too,—must be raised for the fighting forces. And to achieve a total effort we must not only raise, but be prepared to maintain, a navy, an army and an air force as large as Canada can support in a long war.

Men and women are needed to make the machines, the munitions and weapons of war for our fighting men, and to provide their food and clothing and shelter.



Men and women are also needed to make machines and munitions of war for our partners in the war. More men and women are also needed to provide food for the people and the armies of our allies in the active fighting zones.

In wartime, as in time of peace, the people of Canada must continue to be fed, clothed and sheltered; the young must be educated; the sick and the elderly must be cared for; police and fire protection must be provided; transportation must be maintained—a large undertaking in a widespread country. Everyone can think of other work which cannot be neglected. All civilian tasks should, of course, be cut down to the limit. But even when cut to the limit, to fulfill them requires a very large number of men and women.

It is, also, of first importance, that all the demands on the services of our men and women should be kept in balance. If too many persons are allotted to one task, some other task will suffer. There are few more difficult problems than accurately to decide how many men and women should be allotted to the several tasks. To this should be added the problem of deciding what proportion of our forces, supplies, equipment, food and much else should be sent abroad and what proportion it is wise and necessary to retain here.

### *Administration of Manpower Policy*

I come next to the question: Who administers the wartime manpower policy?

The main responsibility for administering wartime manpower policy rests with the Director of National Selective Service, Mr. Elliott Little. He is responsible to the Minister of Labour. For local administration, Employment offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission provide a ready-made administrative machinery. This machinery is being rapidly expanded.

The enlistment of men for the navy, air force and active army will continue to be carried on directly by the three Defence departments. For the immediate present, the conscription of men for military service in Canada will remain the responsibility of the Department of National War Services. It is planned, in the near future, to transfer the task of calling up men for military service to the Director of National Selective Service. In anticipation of this transfer, there will be close co-ordination between the Department of National War Services and the National Selective Service administration. This will serve to avoid undue dislocation of war industry resulting from the calling of men for military service.

In the exercise of its immense powers over the services of men and women, it is realized that the National Selective Service administration may make decisions which, if needless hardship is to be avoided, will require revision. The National War Services Boards



will accordingly be retained to hear appeals from decisions of Selective Service officers.

### *The Use of Compulsion in Selective Service*

A word now as to whether national selective service need be or should be wholly compulsory.

The purpose of National Selective Service, is, as I have said, to control and direct the services of men and women in the manner which will best serve the national interest at a time of war. The control and direction need not be wholly compulsory. In itself compulsion has little or no merit. To the many who are willing to serve there is no need for the employment of compulsion. Compulsion is necessary, however, to obtain service from those who otherwise would not be willing to serve. The application of compulsion requires the services of men to administer and enforce it. Unnecessary compulsion is a waste of time, labour and money. Voluntary methods, where they are satisfactory, represent an immense saving of what is commonly called "red-tape". In times of peace compulsion may readily be kept at a minimum: in times of war, however, its use becomes increasingly essential to an all-out effort.

Compulsory service, in other words, conscription, for the whole of Canada, over the whole of Canada, has been a part of the law of the land since 1940. This has been frequently forgotten, if not at times intentionally overlooked.

### *The Basis of Selective Service*

Without accurate and up-to-date information about our manpower resources, there cannot be total mobilization. It is impossible to control and direct the activities of men and women without knowing how many are available, and what their capacities are. To attempt such a task would be comparable to the attempt of a tailor to make a suit without knowing how much cloth he had. How then, you will ask, is accurate manpower information secured, and how is it kept up to date?

The national registration which was made in 1940 provided basic information which has been of great practical value. A more scientific record of Canada's industrial population has been provided by the records of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. These two sets of records have been combined in a central registry in the Department of Labour. Because of the constant shifts in population in wartime, the task of keeping the records up to date is immense. The records must be so kept if manpower is to be directed efficiently or fairly. This task is now being performed by the Department of Labour.



Special surveys and registers of manpower, needed from time to time, will be made as required. A special registration of womanpower will be undertaken shortly. Also, in the near future, employers will be asked to report all additions to and separations from their staffs since April 1st. I would ask that all concerned co-operate with the government in providing this essential information.

### *Increasing Total Manpower*

The effective use of manpower has two sides. One is concerned with making the services of more persons available for war service; the other with directing men and women into the most suitable forms of service.

How, it will be asked, is the total available manpower for war purposes increased?

The employment of women who have not previously been employed increases the total manpower resources. Apart from the new generation of young men available each year, the total manpower for all essential needs can be increased only by increasing the employment of women. Women are now replacing men in many essential civilian occupations, in some almost entirely. Women are undertaking many of the tasks in war production. Women are also replacing men in many of the duties in the armed forces. In all cases the men replaced are being released for heavier or more hazardous duties.

Concern has been expressed as to the effect of the employment of women on the welfare of the family. That concern is fully shared by the government. It must, however, not be forgotten that a total war effort is needed to protect everything we hold dear, including the family and family life; and that the employment of women is essential to a total war effort. We have only to think of what has happened to family life in enslaved Poland to realize what will happen to the Canadian family if this war is not won.

To help safeguard the welfare of the family, day nurseries for the care of children of working mothers are being established, in co-operation with the provincial authorities, in the two large industrial provinces. Other welfare activities are being vigorously developed in order to protect the health and well-being of women workers and their families.

### *Cutting Down Non-essential Activities*

The total manpower available for war work is also increased by shifting men and women from unessential civilian tasks to more essential activities.

Up to now the shifting of manpower to the armed forces or war production has been the incidental result of cutting down unessential production. The reason for the curtailment has been



the need to conserve scarce materials. But the main reason now for a further cutting down of civilian activities is the need to conserve manpower for direct war needs.

Under the conditions of total war, some industries are properly regarded as wholly non-essential. Many industries in this category have already been shifted to war production, or closed down to conserve materials. In other fields of civilian activity, a certain amount of production is essential for the maintenance of the health and efficiency of the community, upon which the entire war effort depends. Up to a point, the production of such industries is no less essential to a total war effort than the production of war industry itself. Beyond the point of meeting necessary minimum requirements, however, further production is non-essential.

The government, accordingly, has decided that non-essential civilian activities should be curtailed or eliminated. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board, which exercises control over civilian trade and industry, has been directed to put this policy into effect by such measures as appear necessary for the purpose. Additional manpower for war service will thus be made available as rapidly as possible. Besides restricting and eventually eliminating non-essential activity, measures will be taken to ensure that minimum essential needs are satisfied by the use of the least possible amount of manpower, materials, machinery, fuel, power and transportation. In restricting civilian activity, the Wartime Prices and Trade Board will act in closest collaboration with the Director of National Selective Service, whose duty it will be to direct into the most useful channels the manpower released from non-essential civilian activities.

### *Means Taken to Increase Efficiency*

By better organization and by the development of skill, fewer men and women are required for the same task. The efficiency of the manpower and womanpower of Canada has been greatly increased by labour training in technical schools and in industrial establishments. Labour training will be continued on a growing scale.

Provision for housing, the reconditioning of the physically unfit, the maintenance of health standards, and the organization of personnel management are also being promoted by the government. All are contributing to the effective employment of Canadian manpower.

### *The Direction of Manpower*

Turning now to the direction of the services of men and women, you will probably ask: How are persons being directed into the appropriate form of war service?



Men are being compulsorily directed or conscripted for service in the army. Compulsion for military *training* began in 1940; and for military *service* in Canada in 1941. From the outset, all the men were called up who could be trained and equipped. Training facilities and equipment have been made increasingly available. In consequence, in recent months the number of men called up has been increased several times over.

In March last, compulsion and direction were extended to a much wider field than military service. The entry of men into a wide variety of occupations was drastically restricted. As a result, men seeking employment were automatically directed into service more immediately concerned with the war. To conserve essential manpower on the farms, employment in agriculture was stabilized.

A plan was set up to divert engineers and other technicians into direct war service. When this plan was announced, it was indicated that similar direction might later be given to the service of skilled workmen. The first step in directing the services of skilled workmen was taken in June. All industrial employment was, at that time, brought under the control of the Employment Offices. Much more complete control and direction of employment is now necessary.

### *The Control of Employment*

Under the measures of control to be adopted shortly, apart from a few common-sense exceptions, no employer will be permitted to lay off any employee, and no employee will be permitted to quit his employment, without giving reasonable notice in writing. This notice will be called a "Notice of Separation". A copy of this notice will have to be furnished to the nearest employment office. No employer will be permitted to interview or engage any applicant who has not secured a permit from an employment office. Permission to seek employment may be restricted to a given locality, industry, occupation or establishment.

Control will be established over "help wanted" and "situations wanted" advertisements.

After a fixed period, unemployed persons may be required to accept any available suitable work, and persons employed less than normal full-time may be required to transfer to available, full-time, suitable work of which there is special need, or in other words, what is spoken of as work of "high labour priority".

Any employed person who is induced by a National Selective Service officer to accept a new position in which he can contribute more effectively to the prosecution of the war, will be entitled, upon the termination of such essential work, to a similar right to reinstatement in his previous position to that accorded to men in the armed forces.



An aggrieved employer, employee or trade union will have the right to appeal the decision or direction of a National Selective Service officer.

The progressive application of selective service is having two effects. By the elimination of unnecessary civilian activities, luxuries and numerous comforts are disappearing. This may mean inconvenience for many and hardship for some. But it also means that the supply of manpower to fight and to make the weapons with which to fight is being kept up or increased. That is the goal of national selective service.

### *Appeal for Co-operation and Support*

But enact what measures the government may, national selective service cannot succeed unless the Director and his officers receive the whole-hearted co-operation of all the citizens of Canada. I therefore appeal to each one of you for your co-operation and support in this great national effort. Let it never be said that you favour national selective service for someone else, but that you wish to escape it for yourself.

With such time as I have had at my disposal, I have tried to bring home to you the magnitude of the danger and the gravity of the need for the utmost effort on the part of all. It cannot be said too often that the survival of freedom in the world is at stake. It cannot be stressed too strongly that the existence of our own freedom is bound up with the world's freedom. In the present war millions of lives have already been sacrificed "that freedom may not perish from the earth." At this time of the world's greatest need, I appeal to every man and woman in Canada willingly and cheerfully to accept such control and direction of his or her services as may be required in the national interest. It is the sum of individual contributions that makes up the power of the nation as a whole. No service efficiently rendered is too small to help save defeat and to tilt the balance toward ultimate victory. Be inspired by the belief that such self-denial as your war service may involve is essential to the preservation not only of your own freedom but of our country's freedom, and of the freedom of mankind.